

What Is Claimed Is:

1 1. A system, comprising:
2 a server, coupled to the Internet, that has stored thereon
3 information, wherein a client requests said information from said server;
4 means for estimating a response time to said clients request;
5 an on-hold server, coupled to the Internet, said server, and said
6 means for determining, that has stored therein further information; and
7 means for placing said client on-hold if said response time is more
8 than a threshold value, whereby a connection is established between said client and
9 said on-hold server when said client is placed on-hold.

1 2. An apparatus, comprising:
2 means for opening a connection between a client and an interface
3 unit;
4 means for opening a connection between said interface unit and a
5 requested server if no free connection is open between said interface unit and said
6 requested server;
7 means for estimating a response time of said requested server;
8 means for putting said client on-hold if said response time is more
9 than a threshold value;
10 means for determining when said client should be taken off on-hold;
11 means for allowing said client to access information on said
12 requested server via said connections once said client is taken off on-hold; and
13 means for closing said connection between said client and said
14 interface unit while keeping open said connection between said interface unit and
15 said requested server.

1 3. The apparatus of claim 2, wherein said means for opening said
2 connection between said client and said interface unit comprises:

3 means for receiving a request to open a connection using a network
4 address corresponding to said interface unit or said requested server; and

5 means for receiving a request to retrieve data using a path name
6 corresponding to said requested server.

1 4. The apparatus of claim 3, wherein said means for opening said
2 connection between said further client and said interface unit comprises:

3 means for selecting said requested server as a function of said
4 network address.

1 5. The apparatus of claim 4, wherein said means for allowing
2 comprises:

3 means for retrieving said data from said requested server using said
4 path name.

1 6. The apparatus of claim 5, wherein said means for allowing further
2 comprises:

3 means for sending said data to said client.

1 7. The apparatus of claim 6, wherein:
2 said means for receiving a request to retrieve data comprises means
3 for receiving a GET segment having sequence and acknowledgment parameters;
4 and

5 said means for retrieving comprises
6 means for modifying said parameters to produce a modified GET
7 segment, and
8 means for sending said modified GET segment to said requested
9 server.

1 8. The apparatus of claim 2, wherein said means for putting said client
2 on-hold if said response time is more than a threshold value comprises:

3 means for determining a waiting time for said client;
4 means for determining an on-hold request based on said determined
5 waiting time; and

6 means for allowing said client to access information on an on-hold
7 server based on said determined on-hold request.

1 9. The apparatus of claim 8, wherein said means for determining said
2 on-hold request comprises:

3 means for allowing said client to customize said on-hold request.

1 10. The apparatus of claim 9, wherein said means for allowing said
2 client to customize comprises:

3 means for returning to said client a dual framed/multi-window web
4 page, wherein said dual framed/multi-window web page includes a first
5 frame/window and a second frame/window; and

6 means for allowing said client to select at least one category in said
7 first frame/window thereby configuring the contents of said second frame/window.

1 11. The apparatus of claim 2, wherein said means for determining when
2 said client should be taken off on-hold comprises:

3 means for recalculating said response time for said requested server;
4 means for determining whether said client is next to be serviced by
5 said requested server;

6 means for determining when said client is finished with said on-hold
7 server; and

8 means for taking said client off on-hold based on said means for
9 recalculating, said means for determining whether said client is next to be serviced,
10 and said means for determining when said client is finished.

1 12. A method for guaranteeing network performance,
2 comprising the steps of:

3 opening a connection between a client and an interface unit;
4 opening a connection between said interface unit and a requested
5 server if no free connection is open between said interface unit and said requested
6 server;

7 estimating a response time of said requested server;
8 putting said client on-hold if said response time is more than a
9 threshold value;

10 determining when said client should be taken off on-hold;
11 allowing said client to access information on said requested server
12 via said connections once said client is taken off on-hold; and

13 closing said connection between said client and said interface unit
14 while keeping open said connection between said interface unit and said requested
15 server.

1 13. The method of claim 12, wherein the step of opening said
2 connection between said client and said interface unit step comprises the steps of:

3 receiving a request to open a connection using a network address
4 corresponding to said interface unit or said requested server; and

5 receiving a request to retrieve data using a path name corresponding
6 to said requested server.

1 14. The method of claim 13, wherein the step of opening said
2 connection between said client and said interface unit further comprises the step of:

3 selecting said requested server as a function of said network
4 address.

1 15. The method of claim 14, wherein the step of allowing comprises the
2 step of:

3 retrieving said data from said requested server using said path name.

1 16. The method of claim 15, wherein the step of allowing further
2 comprises the step of:

3 sending said data to said client.

1 17. The method of claim 16, wherein:
2 the step of receiving a request to retrieve data comprises the step
3 of receiving a GET segment having sequence and acknowledgment parameters; and
4 the step of retrieving comprises the steps of
5 modifying said parameters to produce a modified GET segment, and
6 sending said modified GET segment to said requested server.

1 18. The method of claim 12, wherein the step of putting said client on-
2 hold comprises of steps of:

3 determining a waiting time for said client;

4 determining an on-hold request based on said determined waiting
5 time; and

6 allowing said client to access information on an on-hold server
7 based on said determined on-hold request.

1 19. The method of claim 18, wherein the step of putting said client on-
2 hold further comprises the step of:

3 allowing said client to customize said on-hold request.

1 20. The method of claim 19, wherein the step of allowing said client to
2 customize comprises the steps of:

3 returning to said client a dual framed/multi-window web page,
4 wherein said dual framed/multi-window web page includes a first frame/window
5 and a second frame/window; and

6 allowing said client to select at least one category in said first
7 frame/window thereby configuring the contents of said second frame/window.

1 21. The method of claim 12, wherein the step of determining when said
2 client should be taken off on-hold comprises the steps of:

3 recalculating said response time for said requested server;
4 determining whether said client is next to be serviced by said
5 requested server;

6 determining when said client is finished with said on-hold server;
7 and

8 taking said client off on-hold based on the step of recalculating, the
9 step of determining whether said client is next to be serviced, and the step of
10 determining when said client is finished.